

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WAHDC 8515

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USIA WASHDC

DIA WASHDC

UNCLAS DAMASCUS 4455

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, SY, LE

SUBJECT: JULY 10 SYRIAN MEDIA ON LEBANON

1. JULY 10 MEDIA DEFENDED SYRIAN POLICY IN LEBANON THROUGH LENGTHY "OFFICIAL SOURCE" STATEMENT. THIS STATEMENT, UNLIKE OTHERS WHICH IN PAST ORIGINATED IN FONMINISTRY, WAS PROBABLY DRAFTED IN PRESIDENCY.

2. STATEMENT ASSERTED THAT CERTAIN PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE FACTIONS WERE TRYING TO OFFEND SYRIA AND DISFIGURE ITS NATIONAL POSITION VIS-A-VIS LEBANON. THEIR LIES INCLUDED LATEST TWO MESSAGES ADDRESSED BY ARAFAT TO PRESIDENT SADAT. STATEMENT ASSERTED THAT SYRIA STOOD AGAINST A MILITARY SETTLEMENT REGARDLESS OF WHICH SIDE WON BECAUSE OF ITS IMPLICIT DANGER OF LEADING TO PARTITIONING OF LEBANON AND ALLOWING SCOPE FOR FOREIGN INTERFERENCE. SYRIA WOULD THEREFORE NOT SIDE WITH ANY FACTION AGAINST ANY OTHER IN LEBANON.

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IT IS WORKING IN OPEN COOPERATION WITH ARAB SECURITY

FORCES TO IMPLEMENT ARAB LEAGUE RESOLUTIONS. IN PROOF OF THIS, HAD SYRIA HAD ANY OTHER INTENTIONS, IT WOULD NOT HAVE HALTED ITS MILITARY ADVANCES INTOO LEBANON LAST MONTH. THERE WAS NO FORCE WHICH COULD HAVE PREVENTED SYRIA FROM DOING WHAT IT WANTED TO DO.

3. BAATH PARTY REGIONAL AND NATIONAL COMMITTEE TRAVELERS SPREAD THE WORD.

TO FURTHER SYRIA'S PUBLIC RELATIONS EFFORTS, TWO MEMBERS OF THE BAATH PARTY COMMANDS, NATIONAL COMMAND MEMBER ANSARI AND REGIONAL COMMAND MEMBER DIAB, ARE TRAVELING IN EUROPE. THEIR MEETINGS IN PARIS WERE CITED BY AFP YESTERDAY AND SYRIAN MEDIA TODAY REPORTED THEIR MEETINGS IN VIENNA WITH CHANCELLOR KREISKY. THE MEDIA STATED THAT ASAD HAD SENT AN ALTERNATE NATIONAL COMMAND MEMBER, SHAYYALAFT, TO THE PRESIDENTS OF ADEN, SOMALI, AND YEMEN TO DESCRIBE SYRIAN EFFORTS TO HELP THE LEBANESE SITUATION.

4. THE MEDIA PUBLISHED FURTHER BATTLE REPORTS, ASSERTING THERE HAD BEEN MORE THAN 2,500 VICTIMS AND 3,500 SERIOOUSLY WOUNDED BETWEEN JUNE 22 - JULY 5, WITH TOTAL DEAD SINCE APRIL 13 LAST YEAR NOW STANDING AT 30,000.

5. CRITICISMS OF IRAQ AND FATAH.

IN INTERVIEWS CARRIED BY SANA, BOTH IRAQ AND FATAH WERE ATTACKED FOR EXPLOITING LEBANESE DEVELOPMENTS IN SUCH A WAY AS TO DISTORT SYRIA'S POSITION. LT. ABBAS HUSSEIN OF FATAH WAS QUOTED AS SAYING HE HAD DESERTED ORGANIZATION AFTER HAVING DECIDED THAT FATAH WAS VIOLATING ITS RULE WHICH PROHIBITS INTERFERENCE IN DOMESTIC AFFAIRS IN ARAB COUNTRIES, I.E., LEBANON. HE ASSERTED FATAH AND OTHER DISSENTENT FACTIONS WERE ENCOURAGED BY USG AND ISRAEL. MEDIA ALSO CARRIED EDITORIAL COMMENTARIES CRITICAL OF THE FATAH LEADERSHIP FOR PURSUING PERSONAL ABMITIONS TO DISADVANTAGE OF PALESTINIAN CAUSE.
MURPHY

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